

In general

- 842 /184 cont. /every girl desires a great
[581] many children, for this is the chief requirement for being married. Moreover, the percentage of barren women -- in childless marriages, [62] they say, the fault is always the woman's -- is not small. According to inquiries, it comes to about 10 per cent. Men generally want boys; the women, girls, in order to have help in the household. 845 Twin births are rare, but they are not regarded as anything special; rather, people are happy about them as they are about other children. Deformities at birth are said not to occur; however, I saw several persons with cleft palates. They seem to be ashamed of this, for in conversations with us they always held 947 their hands over their mouths. Infanticide does not occur. To 123 inquiries about this, there was always the completely horrified counterquestion as to whether that was the case in my country. 165 Overpopulation is not to be feared, even with a larger number. • [163] of children -- the average is three to four living children per family -- since infant mortality comes to more than 50 per cent. [164] Whooping cough is the most frequent cause of death among small children.

a) Birth and Childhood

- 843 The parents' concern for the child begins even before birth. The husband of a pregnant woman expecting her first child must sleep with her very frequently, for otherwise the child would be very weak. In the case of subsequent children this is no longer [783] required so often after the beginning of pregnancy. The pregnant woman may not leave the house or eat pork for two months before the birth, since this causes "pest" and she would have stomach [822] pains; this would be very detrimental to the child. For the same reason she may not eat beans and onions, and no fish because it comes from the cold element, water, and because a pregnant woman must not become cold.
- 843 According to one informant, the pregnant woman retires 343 to the menstruation hut (dúyat) two to three weeks before the 124 birth. During this time her mother or another female relative cooks for the family. According to another informant, the 185/ woman does not retire to the dúyat until the birth. In any 000